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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SPECIAL GROUP

Subject: Proposal to establish new covert satellite reconnaissance clearance for officers concerned with policy and representation on use and control of outer space

It has become necessary to brief a considerably increased number of officers on the general nature and importance of the covert satellite reconnaissance program, in order that policy may be formulated and representation in international bodies may be conducted with due regard to the importance of the program to the national security.

The number of persons granted full clearances for access to operational information on, and to the intelligence product of, the covert satellite reconnaissance projects is and ought to be kept strictly limited to those having a genuine need to know the full details. Officers charged with policy consideration and with representation concerning outer space problems to which knowledge of the covert satellite reconnaissance program is only incidental, though essential, will not need access to the full range of operational information or intelligence product.

What is needed for such officers is a single comprehensive briefing to cover no more operational or intelligence information than is essential for formulating broad foreign policy recommendations, for discussing them intelligently within the policy structure of the government, and for conducting effective representation in international forums. We should avoid exposing the full details of each project to officers who need to know only the broad concept and implications.

It would seem that such officers do need to know in a general way what kinds of projects are in operation and what vehicles are being

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employed, but not the full range of operational information on each project. They also need to know enough of the character and extent of the intelligence product to realize its vital and unique importance to the national security, but not the precise details of the intelligence coverage. It would seem useful also for them to be informed when appropriate as to what is true and what is not true in the purported disclosures published from time to time in newspapers, magazines, and books.

It is submitted that the scope of briefing proposed above is sufficiently comprehensive, though far short of the access authorized by the present full clearances, to require a new formal clearance on the basis of personnel security criteria prescribed for the present clearances, together with a proper security indoctrination and the signature of a security agreement.

Proposed Action:

That the Special Group recommend the establishment, under authority of the Director of Central Intelligence, of a new comprehensive security clearance and briefing on the covert satellite reconnaissance program along the lines indicated above for officers charged with formulating policy recommendations and conducting representation in international bodies concerning problems of outer space.

/s/

U. Alexis Johnson

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